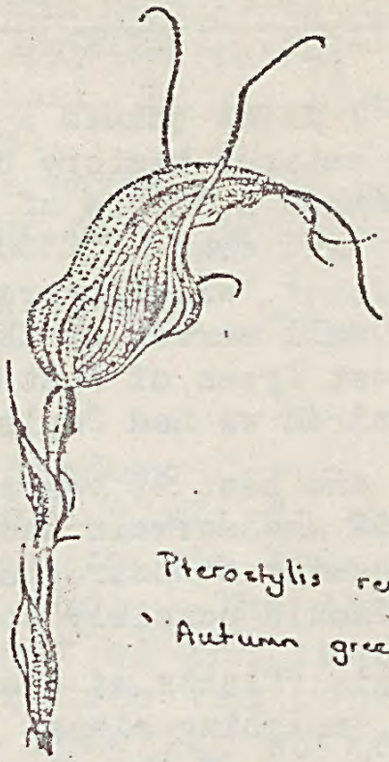
CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

July '82 70



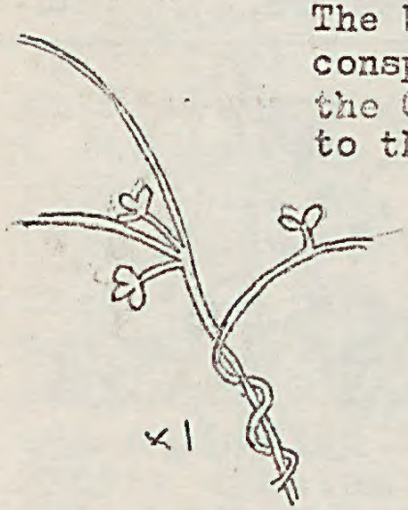
Pterostylis revoluta
'Autumn greenhood'

E. P.

Plants of the Castlemaine District

THE LITTLE STRANGLER VINE (or Cassytha glabella)

In most books the members of the Cassytha genus are called Dodder Laurels, but Strangler-vine seems to be more suitable, because this is just what they do. Unlike human stranglers who work quickly, the cassythas specialise in slow strangulation; the job may take years. Which would be least pleasant?



The big brother, the Tangled Strangler Vine is conspicuous in the district, for example, along the Chewton-Fryerstown Road. The vine can grow to the top of quite large trees and can form a large intertwining mass.

The Little Strangler Vine however, seldom grows to more than a metre and is harder to find. Its stems are much thinner too, but like its big brother, is a leafless parasite.

A good place to look for it is in the middle part of the Kaweka Reserve.

When the seed germinates in the ground, the vine begins to grow until it comes to a nearby shrub. Then it starts to wrap itself around the shrub and attaches itself to the shrub by means of suckers. Eventually the shrub can become the centre of a tangled mass of vines.

I do not know how long a shrub can withstand strangulation. Perhaps some member could watch over a year or two.

Book Review

PLANTS OF WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES by Cunningham, Mulham, Milthorpe and Leigh. Published by N.S.W. Government Printer.

When I first joined a Field Naturalists Club over 20 years ago, good natural history books were rare. The standard plant book was Ewart's "Flora of Victoria", which was then 30 years out of date, and cost £100 second hand. In its place we had the excellent "wildflowers of Victoria" by Jean Galbraith, and eucalypts were well served by the Canberra Forestry and Timber Bureau's "Forest Trees of Australia" and Blakeley's "Key to the Eucalypts". For birds we had Cayley and Leech. There wasn't much else.

Over the past 15 years, the number of books about Australian plants and animals has grown at an increasing rate, and with increasing standard; so much so that one could wonder about what could possibly come next.

Next is "Plants of Western New South Wales". It is a magnificant book, weighing almost 3 kg, and it has coloured photographs of almost all of the plants to be found in the western part of that state. A great number of these are also to be found in our area. With each photo we also get a description and notes.

Undoubtably a wonderful addition to any library.

And the cost? Slightly more than my total membership subscription over 20 years as a Field Naturalist Club member!

It just shows what a bargain our membership rates are. E.P.

GOT A FAVOURITE TREE?

With the Festival on the way again this year a request has come from Phee Broadway for a list of notable trees in the district, and their location, to be included in the Festival Brochure. As this is the Year of the Tree the Festival Committee thought this would be most appropriate.

SUGAR GLIDERS

A letter handed to me by Max Palmer a month or so ago had a little bit of information which was certainly new to me. He had sent a tail to the museum for identification. It was identified as that of a Sugar Glider, with the comment,

'There is conciderable variation in the white tip on the tail, some specimens have a white tip and some do not. Both are concidered typical for this species.'

The only ones I have seen have had no white tip. Perhaps this is typical of our area?

Ed.

On a recent bushwalking trip to Lerderderg Gorge, Tamsin and I were preparing for bed when I heard a slight noise of something hitting our tent. I looked up to see the shape of a sugar glider silhouetted against the door. The little possum had somehow got caught in the door of the tent. After we had admired its shining eyes and delicate feathery tail for a few minutes, Tamsin attempted to free it, whereupon it scuttles up her arm and entangled itself in her long hair! Eventually we were able to free the glider and disappeared into the darkness, but Tamsin complained of an itchy head for the next day or two.

Anne Perkins

FIRTH PARK

Despite the lack of rain it was decided to go to Firth Park to look for fungi just in case the higher rainfall and mountain gully would have encouraged a few to grow. Twenty or so optimists, including children went, and were well rewarded, Some of the best finds of the afternoon were made by the children including tiny, but brilliant, blue Mycena interrupta or Pixie's parasol, and a larger brick red specimen with vermillion gills, not positively identified, , but suspected to be poisonous. There were lots of Mycena species (these are the dainty 'parasols') and coral fungi, and a few of the jelly fungi.

Traces of a wombat were found around the area, but unfortunately we didn't find him.

It was a very pleasant day, and a most enjoyable outing, only marred by a twisted ankle, which I hope is well on the mend by now.

JUNE MEMBERS' NIGHT

Magpies seemed to dominate reports at the last General Meeting. Joyce Chapman saw magpies escorting , one each side, a suspiciously tipsy Grey Currawong which had been feasting on Hawthorn berries. Several members commented that the Grey Currawongs and Magpies seem to get along quite amicably. Not so the Choughs. Geoff Sitch related an incident he had seen where the choughs had arranged themselves in a circle about 2 metres across, all facing out, to defend themselves against a Magpie attack.

Another incident reported was that of a fox being 'bombed' by a group of about four Magpies as he was heading home just after daybreak. The Magpies were so persistant that the fox stumbled several times.

The were a number of other bird sightings including a Chestnut Rumped Heath Wren. A White Fronted Chat was reported at Campbelltown.

A Brown Goshawk, found hurt at 'Buda' was placed in one of the aviaries until it recovered.

A number of interesting specimens were brought along, including the Wanderer butterfly, which had died ,(apparantly because of the cold) which had emerged from the chrysalis brought to last month's meeting.

Estelle Elliott showed aseries of slides, which, she said was of the way the Elliotts would remember Castlemaine. There were wildflowers from Kalimna, Barkers Creek and Taradale - Golden Wattles, Scented Sundews, Fairy Wax, Hardenbergia, Blue Pincushions, Everlastings, orchids, and more - all taken on the families rambles through the bush on Ken's days off.

Keith Bradbury, a beekeeper, seed collector and conservationist from Bunbury W.A., and friends of the Newells, at the Club's invitation, told a little of their work and of their concern for the W.A. country side, which is being abused by farming interests, both on the land and politically.

Need for proper biological surveys to be done and heeded before any more land was released was stressed.

Keith and his wife were over in Victoria for a conference, a and to try to get the Victorians to realize the seriousness of the situation in W.A. Salting and erosion are very serious problems agravated by indiscriminate clearing, but there is also the very real danger of some rare plant species, such as the underground orchid, becoming extinct.

Lloyd Bransgrove, by co-incidence, brought along a set of slides taken on their last holiday - to Western Australia!

Most of the areas shown were more north and east of where Kieth was speaking in particular, and Lloyd had some lovely shots of flowers and countryside, such as several Kangaroo Paws, Smoke-bush, and a number of shots of different Verticordias, some of which are very lovely.

We 're looking forward to the slides Lloyd brings home from Queensland - taken with his new camera.

For those interested in coming along to the Committee meetings, it has been decided to start the meetings at 7.30 pm, 4th Thursday's

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LIBRARY NOTES

We wish to bring to the notice of members that there are many books and magazines in our Library, which are available at any time.

These books or magazines can be taken home and returned at the next meeting, or when you have finished them.

Just write the name of the book taken, the date, and your name in the book provided, and when you return the book, enter the name and date returned, please.

Each month we recieve the "Whirrakie" which is the Bendigo F.N.C. publication and is always very interesting. We also recieve publications from Ballarat and Maryborough F.N.Cs. Then there are many backdated copies available, even if the current copy is not at the meeting.

There are also many copies of Rural Research and Ecos which are published quarterly, and both have many interesting articles.

Frank Blake.

WESTERN VICTORIA FIELD NATURALISTS CLUBS ASSOCIATION

Geelong F.N.C. Campout at Ocean Grove

30 July to 1 August 1982

Host Club: Geelong Field Naturalists Club
P.O. Box 1047
Geelong 3220.

Location: INGAMELLS: Uniting Church conference centre, Hodgson Street, Ocean Grove - entrance opposite Powell Street East.

Accommodation: Hostel-type units; 26 units of which 12 have two double bunks and one single bed, 8 with two double bunks in each, and 6 with one double bunk in each.
You will need to bring sleeping bag, sheets, blankets, rugs etc.

Catering: Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be catered for by the Centre staff.
Some assistance in table service and dish-washing may be required.

Times: Friday evening to Sunday afternoon.

Cost: $18 per person for the full weekend, children $13.50.

It is hoped that as many delegates and friends as possible will be able to arrive on Friday to take full advantage of the program that the Geelong members will have arranged.

(Cost per day is $9, children $6.75)

Booking: Please contact Trevor Pescott (052-434368) or Graeme Tribe (052-552302) no later than Sunday July 25.

Camping: Camping is not permitted at the Centre. (Although camping or alternative accommodation is available at Ocean Grove, it is hoped that all attending the weekend will 'live-in' at the Centre.)

PROGRAM:

Friday evening - informal get-together at the Centre.

Saturday
8.00am to 9.00am - breakfast.

Morning - informal activities in local areas including Connewarre Lakes, beaches, mangrove flats, nature reserve.

12.00 to 12.45pm - lunch.

1.00pm Depart for You Yangs where the G.F.N.C. has a boneseed eradication program in progress, inspection of Little River Aboriginal bora ground.

5.30 to 6.30pm - evening meal.

6.30pm W.V.F.N.C.A. delegates meeting.

8.00pm General meeting.

Welcome by G.F.N.C. President, Trevor Pescott.
Guest speakers and color slide presentation.
Supper.

Sunday
8.00 to 9.00am - breakfast.

9.30am Morning to be spent at Point Lonsdale, rock pools and beach.

12.00noon To Ocean Grove Nature Reserve for lunch and afternoon.

3.30pm Break up. Those who wish to see the Giant Petrels at Black Rocks can return to Geelong via the Thirteenth Beach Road.

CLUB PROGRAMME

MEETINGS

Friday July 9th
Mallee fowl, Mr Graham Saunders, M'borough
Thursday July 22, 7.30pm *
Business meeting

Friday Aug 13
Rev Colin Burt, Birds of America

Thursday Aug 26
Business Meeting

Friday Sept 10
"Parsonic Perambulations"
A Wander around Katamite with the Elliott Family.

Thursday Sept23
Business meeting

MEETINGS

Meetings are held in the Education Centre, Mostyn St. (in the S.E.C. building) at 8pm.

Visitors are welcome at Club sessions.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Family $5-00
Single $3-00
Student/Junior $I-00
Supporting $I0-00

OUTINGS

Saturday July I0

Leave Ed. Centre I.30 pm sharp.

Fri 3I July-Sun I Aug Ocean Grove.
W.V.F.N.C.A. Campout hosted by Geelong Club. Details inside.

Saturday Aug I4
Mosquito Flat. Leader Miss M.Oliver

Saturday II Sept
Werona - out Yandoit way.
Leaders, Mr G. Sitch and Mr F.Blake

Monday 20 Sept
Annual Showday Walk. Possibly Porcupine Ridge. Time and Place to be confirmed.

Sunday Oct 3
Fryers Ridge. Joint Excursion with Bendigo F.N.C. Meet at I0.30 at the Market

Sunday Oct I7
Stuart Mill with the Maryborough F.N.C.

Sat Oct 23-Sun Oct 24
Creswick. W.V.F.N.C.A. Campout at Creswick, hosted by Creswick F.N.C.

FROM THE COMMITTEE

Finance: $I50-99 ($I6-78 Cash in hand, $I39-2I in bank)
Room hire fees for the year are to be paid.

TEA ROSTER - A list

TEA ROSTER- A sheet will be made available at the next meeting for volunteers to

TEA ROSTER - At the July meeting a sheet will be available for members to volunteer for the tea roster for the meetings up til Christmas.
meetings It was suggested that those on duty bring a 600 ml carton of milk, tea towels and some detergent.